

School Scenario: Elm Elementary School

School Name Elm Elementary School	Grade Levels Served K–5	Population Students: 513 Teachers: 57
Demographics Black: 95% Other: 5%	Existing School Teams School Leadership Teams Grade-Level Teams	

The principal is a second-year principal who inherited a school under federal priority sanctions. The principal had three different supervisors within one school year. He is often in his office involved in discipline-related meetings with students, teachers, parents, or some combination of the three. The primary responsibility assigned to his assistant principal is some form of student discipline. She rarely engages in instructional matters of the school. The principal uses the school-based content specialists to assist with instructional matters and lead the school leadership team. The principal conducts classroom observations for teacher annual appraisals using the assigned evaluation instruments. He rarely conducts instructional walk-throughs unless he receives alarming reports from his school-based content specialists.

The principal has a difficult time managing e-mails and other correspondence. He typically leaves hundreds of e-mails unread and prints out messages to read during the weekend. Although he maintains a calendar, this principal often arrives late to meetings or cancels meetings minutes before they were scheduled to start. Before meetings with supervisors or state education workers, the principal is briefed by the school-based content specialists. The principal often is defensive and challenges any suggestions of change. He often says the suggestions are “too much” and will pull him from the classrooms and into more meetings. Overall, the principal has a decent relationship with school staff members and parents; however, he has a strained relationship with one of the community’s major civic leagues. The superintendent often contacts the principal directly with his concerns and requests.

Teachers receive support from school-based content specialists who primarily work with small groups of students and support teachers’ instructional delivery based on principal directives. The principal visits classrooms infrequently and uses information gleaned from the school-based content specialists to fuel many of his instructional decisions and directives. The principal and a group of teachers from the school leadership team predetermined professional development activities prior to school opening. It is unclear whether the principal and this group of teachers used data to determine the professional development topics. Little to no follow-up or classroom observations occur to view the implementation of new learning or strategies after teachers participate in professional development activities.

The school is divided into two temporary sites while the main campus undergoes renovations. Students in Grades 2–5 are located in an older, reopened school building. Grades K–1 are housed in portable units at a neighboring school, which is more than two miles from the temporary

campus. The K–1 teachers report that the split campus makes it more difficult for them to access the school-based content specialists and library services as well as check out classroom materials. Grade-level instructional walk-throughs occur at the main site occurs, but not on a regular basis and infrequently at the early grades' site. The teachers at the early grades' site have scheduled time to plan in pairs, but not as grade-level teams. Although the planning time is scheduled, teacher pairs rarely use that time to plan together. Teachers mostly work in silos. Teachers at the main site use the scheduled time to plan. School-based content specialists lead planning sessions and review lesson plans. The principal is not involved in the review and the specialists debrief the principal with their concerns.

Address the following:

- What are some of the challenges this principal is facing?
- What are some things the principal could do differently?
- Prioritize and recommend next steps.
- Use the action plan format to identify one next step for this principal.